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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 16-19 FEBRUARY 1993

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Thomas Stelzer (Austria)

CHAPTER II. FIELD VISITS

1. The report of the UNDP/UNFPA field visit to Bolivia (29 August-5 September 1992) and Paraguay (6-13 September 1992) was presented by the delegate from the United Kingdom. He noted that representatives of six delegations had participated in the visit: France, Italy, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and Uruguay. In his presentation, the delegate of the United Kingdom highlighted the degree of cooperation with UNDP in both countries and the notable commitment of all UNDP staff in the field offices.

2. During the discussion, one delegate commented on the report, drawing attention to the social aspects of development in the transition to a market economy and the use of UNDP resources to support a strategy for this; to the creation of a data bank to support market reforms; and to the need for further analytical work on the introduction of a market economy.

3. The report of the field visit to Syria (31 August-6 September 1992) and Yemen (7-13 September 1992) was presented by the delegate from Ghana, who noted that representatives of eight countries had participated in the visit: Austria, Cuba, Germany, Ghana, Nigeria, Poland, Romania and Saint Lucia. In commenting on the field visit, he drew attention to the introduction of the programme approach in both countries, noting some of the difficulties still

existing. With respect to national execution, the Government of Syria had embraced this modality for UNFPA projects, but only a few UNDP activities were nationally executed. In both countries, the neutral and catalytic role of UNDP was recognized. As regards coordination, the existing framework was adequate in Syria, but practical problems existed in Yemen on the sides of both the Government and UNDP. The performance of the Office for Project Services was considered to be mixed in the two countries. The role of UNDP as an important partner in development in both countries was acknowledged.

4. A number of other delegates commented on the report on visits to Syria and Yemen. It was noted that the report on the field visits to these two countries seemed less positive than the observations made on the two Latin American countries. A comparison was requested between the two regions with regards to the reasons for the different degree of implementation of Governing Council decisions. It was noted that the lack of a national plan would hinder a programme approach, yet many countries lacked such a plan, especially the poorer countries. One delegation noted that the problem of existing differences between official and market exchange rates would have to be taken up with concerned Governments to assure UNDP the most favourable exchange rate. While one delegate questioned whether UNDP had fully implemented relevant General Assembly resolutions at the field level, another pointed out that objective conditions often hindered their implementation in concrete cases. It was proposed that a synthesis be prepared on the field visits held so far.

5. The Assistant Administrator and Director, BPPE, responded to delegations by noting that the countries under discussion represented extremes in application of the programme approach. In one case, there was support at the highest level for the programme approach but in another there was need for an incremental approach to achieve a programme approach. At the fortieth session of the Governing Council, a report would be submitted on decentralization and there could also be an overview report on field visits. He also stated that while it was desirable to have a comprehensive national plan for the programme approach, it was also possible to use sectoral plans or investment plans for this purpose.

6. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States added that the specific realities in each country needed to be taken into account when judging programme implementation. On exchange rates, he noted that UNDP was following this matter closely.

7. The Chairman of the Committee underlined the value of field visits and the importance of their continuation, but cautioned against making comparisons between countries, given their diversity.

8. The Committee took note of the reports before it and agreed that the Bureau of the Standing Committee should discuss modalities for preparing a synthesis of field visits and report back to the Committee.

9. In reporting back to the Committee, the Bureau agreed to undertake a synthesis of the findings and recommendations contained in the reports on field visits that have so far been submitted to the Standing Committee. The synthesis of the reports would be submitted to the Standing Committee at its in-sessional meeting during the fortieth session of the Governing Council.